

# THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

17 November 2017

count of the number of parents I have seen taking a photo of the big Copper Beech tree this week. So, this morning, as I looked at the tree gleaming majestically in the bright winter sunlight, I thought I would capture the moment through my camera. Beautiful isn't it?

## School Events

This is the time of the year when the conveyor belt of school term speeds up and special events come along thick and fast. Blink and you'll miss one, so please do keep a close eye on the calendar over the coming weeks. The first Christmas event is next Friday (1500-1730), when the SFPA will be hosting a Christmas Fair in Ashburton Hall and, for the first time, in the new STEAM Hub. There will be a wide range of stalls selling Christmas presents and plenty of games and activities for the children, so it should be a great family event.

## Music

The past week has seen two musical events, the Tea-Time Concert last Friday and the Autumn Concert last night. The informal nature of the Tea-Time Concert enables soloists to play to their parents and teachers in a relatively relaxed setting. The Autumn Concert is the first major music occasion of the year and a great opportunity for the many ensembles to perform. Given that the groups have been together for just six weeks, the quality was remarkable. It was great to see so many musicians performing and hear such a wide range of musical groups, from the jazz band to the choir and the senior strings to the large concert band. We are blessed with talented pupils and dedicated teachers and when the two are working together effectively, the result is stunning, as we saw last night. As one parent said in her email to Mr Gorick and me last night, 'That was a musical triumph! We have all come home humming, singing and clapping. It was pure joy from beginning to end. Thank you so much and congratulations to all the teachers involved.' Here are a few photos of the Autumn Concert rehearsals.

## Sport

It has also been a busy week for the sports teams. Last weekend saw the first of this year's national gym finals, the 'two-piece' competition, in which competitors perform vaults and a floor routine. Our gymnasts did the school proud and came away with no less than four national titles, winning both the individual and team championships at U11 and U13 age groups. Many congratulations to all who took part and a special mention to Viraj (U11) and Finn (U13) who won the individual competitions. On Tuesday, the U13 girls' hockey team were in action at Repton School, in the national prep schools finals. By winning three and drawing one of their five group matches, our girls qualified for the quarter finals which they lost 1-0 to Millfield, the eventual winners. Mr Welch and Mr Thompson were delighted with the team's performances on the day; to finish in the top eight in the country is a great achievement, so many congratulations to the girls involved. We look forward to our U12 girls' hockey team competing in their age-group national finals next Friday.

## Road Safety

Next week is national 'Road Safety Week', with a campaign theme of 'speed down, save lives.' During the week we will be talking to the children about road safety and reminding parents about our traffic and parking guidelines. Our messages are for the whole school community, so we seek your support in promoting the many initiatives we have introduced to help keep the children safe in and around school.

## Pre Prep

ng start with 1RP's assembly on travel. Some lovely songs, including a rousing rendition of 'rocking, rolling, riding', and a confident performance of a short story, 'Oi get off the train', made for a most entertaining start to the day. The children spoke with great clarity and clearly enjoyed the experience of performing to their parents and teachers. Well done to the class, their teacher and assistant, Mr Pallister and Mrs Ingrey.

Speaking of the Pre Prep, this photo shows the Foundation children hard at work, practising their handwriting within a few minutes of arriving at school one morning this week. I was impressed by how quickly they settled and focussed on the task. Later on in the day, I enjoyed time with some budding young scientists in the Pre Prep Science Club, making a pH indicator out of red cabbage; the children were testing a few kitchen cupboard items to discover if they were acidic or alkaline. Previous club activities have included making ice cream using the super-cooling effect of salt on ice, building towers using spaghetti and marshmallows, exploring magnets and launching stomp rockets!

## Book Fair

There was a calm and relaxed atmosphere in the Library when I popped in to the Book Fair at lunchtime on Thursday. Pupils were selecting their favourite novels, reading and assiduously completing their homework. Miss Johnson has certainly created a most welcoming and

comfortable 'place to chill out' as one girl put it when I asked her why she enjoyed coming to the Library.

## Year 5 Play

The school week ended with the first Drama production of the year - the Year 5 mini-plays, in which each class told one of four famous stories – The Pied Piper, The Selfish Giant, The Happy Prince and The Emperor's New Clothes. Skilful acting, fast-moving scenes and a real sense of fun made for a most entertaining show. It is always great to see every child on stage, gaining confidence by performing in front of an appreciative audience.

## Finally..

As I walked around school one day this week, I took photos of some of the displays of work on the walls of the classrooms. See if you can spot your child's work?!

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell